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ABSTRACT

Written from the perspective that the technology available for language study can be better used, a discussion of television use in second language instruction looks at imaginative uses of the medium for a variety of instructional purposes. The first section identifies opportunities for the use of television, including: as a motivator; in teaching grammar and composition; in listening comprehension practice; in conversation practice; in pronunciation practice; for teaching literature; and for teaching nonverbal elements of communication (context, kinesics, and culture). Examples of specific classroom activities used successfully are offered, often with support in language teaching theory. The second section describes exemplary approaches to televised language instruction for German, English (second language), and Spanish instruction at universities around the United States, including the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of Minnesota, American University, and the University of Illinois. A third section outlines possible delivery systems for televised materials. Further classroom research on the use of video technology in language teaching is recommended. (MSE)

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The School of Humanities

University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign

THE ROLE OF TELEVISION AS AN AID IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

BY JUNETTA GILLESPIE

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THE ROLE OF TELEVISION AS AN AID IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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INTRODUCTION

The author of this report comes to the subject not through any expertise in foreign language teaching, but rather via the "back door" of technology, as an instructional television coordinator for a learning resource center dealing primarily with foreign language teaching. My approach, therefore, has not been through questions concerning better ways to teach language, which would be presumptuous, but rather through a desire to find more effective ways to use existing equipment, facilities, and personnel in support of efforts by teachers to further goals they already deem important.

As background for this paper, I have relied chiefly on H. Douglas Brown's book *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*, recommended to me both by students of language teaching and practicing teachers as providing an up-to-date and objective summary of the present state of theory and research in this area of pedagogy.¹ Among other useful information, Brown provides a brief history of basic teaching methodologies since 1900, beginning with the "direct" method in which classes were conducted orally and directly in the target language without any translation or formal presentation of grammar.

When research revealed that students were, by and large, emerging from formal study without any ability for genuine communication in the language, a reaction occurred in the form of the "grammar-translation" method, introduced just after World War I: this theory assumed that about all that could reasonably be expected of students undergoing a normal exposure to language training was the ability to read, all other classroom activities being subordinated to that end.

After World War II, the theories of neobehaviorism and structural linguistics were combined as the basis for the "audio-lingual" method, which relied heavily on rote-style drills, topical dialogues, and emphasis on pronunciation. It was during this period that language laboratories were introduced, technology and theory combining to justify a heavy reliance on the use of audio-tape as a teaching aid.

Not too surprisingly, the 1960s witnessed yet another reaction, this time based on findings that students trained in the audio-lingual method were generally unable to communicate fluently, if at all, in the target language. "Cognitive code learning," based on the theories of Noam Chomski, but rather ill-defined as a teaching method, posited a kind of "built-in" language system in the human brain. Educators began to emphasize the importance of meaningful communication in second language acquisition, which led to the introduction of the "situational approach," as well as the current interest in "communicative competence."

While it may be an intellectually precarious undertaking to attempt to relate any of these theories to television as the audio-visual aid of choice, it might be argued that, just as audio-recording lent itself especially well to the audio-lingual approach to language teaching, so television is well suited for "situational" or "communicative" approaches. But, since it is a highly adaptable and flexible medium, able to serve as a convenient delivery system for other audio-visual aids, its use is certainly not limited to classrooms emphasizing these approaches.²

In any event, the actual practice in the great majority of U.S. language classrooms today is, sensibly enough, eclectic, with different methodologies employed for different purposes as the teacher deems appropriate.

Television as an educational technology enters this picture in the mid-fifties, thus coinciding in its earliest period with the vogue for the audio-lingual method. To the extent that this method actually prevailed, at least among trend setters such as institutions of higher learning engaged in teacher training on a fairly large scale, it might be said that the new technology was at odds with the methodology: after all, it was hardly needed in order to conduct oral/aural drills or as a mechanism for conditioning. Whether or not this may have militated against the use of television in language teaching is difficult to assess; in any event, it was probably less important than such technologically-determined matters as the inability to record video conveniently prior to the introduction of video-tape recording (and especially to the availability of cassettes), and the resultant difficulty in delivering a product in convenient formats and at convenient times.

An examination of projects involving foreign language instruction over the period 1950-1964 reveals that most of these were designed for college level or elementary level (both more adaptable in terms of scheduling than secondary schools), and most often consisted of what Corder has termed "whole" or "major job" teaching.³ A quick tabulation of research results shows that televised instruction was, on the whole, about as effective as "conventional" classroom instruction. Chu and Schramm, while carefully pointing out the difficulties of designing valid experiments in this area, chiefly due to the almost insuperable problems in controlling all relevant variables, nevertheless cite the mass of evidence as worthy of attention: of 77 studies examined involving televised language teaching, 88.3% showed that groups taught by television did as well as or better than conventionally taught students on whatever measures of achievement were brought to bear in each experiment.⁴

Thus, it would seem reasonably responsible to state that by 1965 television had more than adequately demonstrated its viability as an effective medium for language instruction, in spite of having to be used in the rather inflexible and inconvenient manner dictated by the technology up until that time. The technology of the '80s provides us with much more flexibility and opportunities for selective and imaginative use of this medium which have only begun to be explored.

The purpose of this paper is to point out some of these opportunities, relating them to aspects of language teaching which have been deemed important by at least some language educators; to present some actual examples of innovative use of the medium; and finally, to take a look ahead at some possibilities for the future use of television in foreign language learning and teaching.

In short, we present a sort of "smorgasbord" from which teachers may sample as and if they choose.

TELEVISION AS AN AID TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

As a "Motivator"

The power of television in the affective realm has long been recognized. Cornfield points out that today's student is accustomed to living in a world where electronic media play an important role.

The world in which he lives, grows, and learns is alive with noise, color, and movement.

And in what kind of classroom atmosphere do we expect him to learn? What kind of fare do we offer him? The same four walls, the same book, the same voice of the same teacher day after day?⁵

Nostrand found that filmed recitation of French poetry

. . . has confirmed my conviction that an audio-visual model leads to more intense attention on the part of the learner and to better retention.⁶

Hebrew and French classes at the University of Illinois have used television in this manner. Skits, mostly humorous in nature, were written and acted by class members; the results were a considerable practice in writing, speaking, and comprehension, plus a noticeably beneficial effect on class *esprit de corps*. (Needless to say, skits can be done without being televised. However, using television seems to heighten motivation in a manner similar to what might be achieved by inviting in an outside audience, while being considerably less time consuming. It also allows for playback and critiques at a later time.)⁷

In Teaching Grammar and Composition

Jean-Paul Berwald describes an interesting exercise based on commercial television programs either viewed live or recorded off the air.⁸ Third- and fourth-level high school classes watched a program in class, taking notes, in the target language, of a five- to ten-minute segment, which they were asked to expand into a composition form. They then worked together as a class to produce a single composition recorded by the teacher on an overhead projector, with appropriate comments and corrections. If television equipment is not available, students can be asked to watch a program at home in the evening.

Writing practice is, of course, involved in many permutations of the use of skits or minidramas, and television, sans sound, or with it, can be used as the basis for writing scripts, dialogues, or "commercial messages."

In Listening Comprehension Practice

It is axiomatic among language teachers that students should be exposed to a variety of voices, preferably of native speakers:

Learning to understand one teacher, even the native speaker, is not enough, for he is limited by his own cadence, his particular choice of vocabulary, and his particular personal style. The student needs to hear many different people, many different voices, and many different styles.⁹

It seems obvious that most "real" listening takes place in a visual context. Only in cases of telephone conversations, eavesdropping, and language laboratories is one expected to comprehend messages without any accompanying visual clues. According to Kern:

Facial closeups can convey more vividly the manner of pronunciation than any description, and visually almost compel the viewer to involuntary, or, if exhorted, voluntary imitation.¹⁰

There are, as well, a variety of visual clues to meaning, a matter to be discussed in a later section of this paper.

Berwald uses videotapes of French television broadcasts in conjunction with audio-recordings of the soundtrack, slides, and vocabulary sheets. If target language materials are not available, a special narration can be read or recorded to accompany readily obtainable programming from commercial or educational channels.¹¹

Asher's "Total Listening Response Technique," in which students were asked to respond physically to commands delivered in the target language would also seem to be readily adaptable to the television medium,¹² particularly in a variant version used by Elkins, Kalivoda, and Morain where props and drawings are used extensively.¹³ Televised demonstrations of actions to be performed could be simply produced and eliminate the need for "props," and perhaps the range of possible situations could be extended. "Audio only" dubs could also be used.

In Conversation Practice

A number of possibilities present themselves for the use of television in encouraging students to speak in the target language: these include, among others, (1) the production of classroom skits, whether written and memorized, read, or improvised, for later playback and critique; (2) the use of commercial television or public television without sound track, with students asked to provide narration, or for use as a basis for class discussion in the target language.¹⁴

Classes in the University of Illinois Intensive English Institute have used videotapes as a means of recording classroom discussion or oral presentations by students for later critique. Teaching assistants in English as a Second Language have also produced minidramas which serve as models for pattern practice drills, the visual element serving the function of contextualizing the meaning of word patterns being learned.

Keilstrup describes a technique he has developed and used in advanced German conversation classes at the University of Texas at Arlington. Each carefully-structured video unit extends over twelve class periods beginning with the

introduction and translation by students of a basic dialogue, followed by student composition of minidramas, videotaping, testing, critiquing, and, finally, using linguistic skills and vocabulary gained in "real life" situations. Keilstrup cites as a particular advantage of this method the fact that students *"may repeat performances until best performance levels are reached and grades given,"* and finds that "Enunciation, pronunciation, intonation, audibility, gestures, i.e., 'the totality of the speech act' usually improve quickly."¹⁵

In Pronunciation Practice

Ecklund and Wiese report successful use of videotaping as an aid to evaluation and correction of students' pronunciation.¹⁶ In a French course combining elementary phonetics and conversation, students at Southern Connecticut State College spent ten out of sixty contact hours during the semester in various exercises utilizing an improvised television "studio" equipped with color camera. At the beginning of the semester each student records a prose passage for comparative purposes. Short sentences and diagnostic words are also recorded as a basis for analysis of each student's pronunciation difficulties.

During the term, videotaping is done every other week during a 50-minute laboratory period; playbacks are usually done in front of the entire class, so that teachers and students can analyze pronunciation faults together. At some playback sessions, students are asked to repeat a word or sound while looking in a mirror, and then to observe a taped pronunciation of the same sound. On other occasions, playbacks of studio tapes are preceded by playbacks of the same text read by a native speaker. While evaluation has been informal, the investigators state that ". . . no student ends the video experience without having made considerable progress, and that the most marked improvement always seems to occur at the lower levels of performance."¹⁷

In Teaching Literature

Nostrand used filmed recitations of literary works recited by a professional in first- and second-year language classes. Besides providing a model for intonation and pronunciation, particularly in reading poetry, he found that this practice aroused "expectations of enjoying literature in the language."¹⁸

In a freshman-level literature course at the University of Illinois, Professor Michael Shapiro assigned students to memorize and perform roles in scenes from the dramas being studied. Scenes were then videotaped and played back later in class. Several versions of each scene were made by different groups, and varying interpretations of roles as well as acting styles were discussed. These dramatizations motivated students to study the plays carefully for clues as to how the characters should be performed, and, incidentally, led to a good deal of memorizing of lines from great dramatic works. Although this course was offered in English, the method is equally applicable to the study of literature in other languages.

Professor Robert J. Nelson of the University of Illinois French Department is using another technique adaptable to the television medium. Students in one

of his literature classes produce dramatic adaptations of French stories and novels which are then recorded on audio tape.

In Teaching Non-Verbal Elements of Communication (Context, Kinesics, Culture)

In the possible uses of television already listed in this paper, we have inevitably touched on the most important one that underlies most other possible applications: the teaching of those aspects of language behavior which are non-verbal and increasingly recognized by linguists and language educators as extremely important and too often overlooked.

Corder, for example, cites the importance of language understood in a situational context, citing such authorities as Bloomfield, Firth, and Martinet.¹⁹

Hayes refers to "signal material" (body and facial motions) and "situational dialects" (degrees of formality in language use based on status, occasion, etc.)

. . . accurate descriptions of the semiotic correlative of situational contexts as they differ for different cultures will one day have considerable influence on the content of foreign language teaching materials, particularly at advanced levels of instruction.²⁰

Rivers, in her pioneering work, *The Psychologist and the Foreign Language Teacher*, relates these concepts more directly to language teaching. Referring to the research of Osgood and his associates in the factor analysis of meaning, she states:

The external nonverbal context, or total situational matrix, composed of facial expressions and gestures of the speaker and the associated objects and activities, is the context most frequently neglected in foreign-language teaching. Unless the teacher has an intimate knowledge of the culture of the native speakers of the language, this context must be supplied by visual aids, particularly films made in the country where the language is spoken.²¹

Rivers also raises questions about the emphasis on aural communication alone occasioned by the extensive use of audio language laboratories:

Reduction in the amount of drill in which the teacher participates with the student may well be an advantage to the teacher and a disadvantage to the student. As the laboratory does not provide a face-to-face situation, with its accompanying features of gesture, facial expression, tone of voice, and meaningful situation, new words and expressions practiced exclusively in the laboratory do not develop associations with situational stimuli.²²

In addition to the contextual or situational importance of non-verbal aspects of language, its kinesic aspects would also seem to merit more attention in the classroom. It is even possible that non-native language teachers may be counter-productive in this area if they regularly accompany discourse in a second language with gestures appropriate to the students' first language, in an attempt to make meaning clearer.

Birdwhistell has estimated that the average American, for example, speaks for only 10 to 11 minutes a day, with more than 65% of social meaning of a typical two-person exchange being carried out by non-verbal cues.²³ Many commentators have cited the numerous and rather drastic cross-cultural differences that exist between speakers of different cultures and languages, which may cause even the most perfect intonation, pronunciation, and grammar to deliver the wrong message. To make matters worse, the misunderstanding may take place, if participants are not alert, at a subliminal level. For examples, see, among others, the essay by Kirch in which he cites whole lists of ways of expressing submission, or of using head motions to indicate positive or negative responses.²⁴

How best to go about teaching the kinesic aspects of language is another matter. In spite of pronouncements such as Green's:

It is neither unrealistic nor unreasonable to expect the language instructor to insist that his pupils use authentic foreign culture gestures whenever appropriate in dialogue repetition . . .²⁵

it is clear that a large amount of teacher training plus the availability of a considerable quantity of teaching materials would be necessary. For both of these purposes, the medium of television would seem to be highly appropriate. How and where to acquire the appropriate "software" and various means for distributing it will be considered below.

The teaching of the "culture" of the country or countries in which the target language is spoken is already widely, if not universally, accepted as a legitimate and important aspect of foreign language instruction. In most language classrooms, culture with a small "c"²⁶ is typically imparted in informal ways--teacher comments, background provided for situation dialogues found in texts, etc. If audio-visual aids are used, they tend most often to be realia or slides taken on trips. Culture in the grander sense--monuments, historical sites, famous buildings, works of art, etc.--lends itself to slides and photographs as well as to informal passages in, for example, intermediate texts.

Morain discusses the great importance to the communicative process of "object language" (the signs, clothing, realia, etc., surrounding spoken discourse) and "environment language" (physical settings, architecture--most usually not on a grand scale--and landscape).²⁷ While those visual aids mentioned above are valuable, and effective in the hands of a knowledgeable teacher, only television (or film) could provide actual dialogues in interaction with these "other languages."

Both common sense and the weight of testimony by educators interested in non-verbal aspects of language point to dramatization as the presentational method of choice. Huebener is only one of a number of commentators expressing enthusiasm:

Probably nothing is superior to dramatization as an activity for practicing a foreign language. It is psychologically sound, for it connects the action with the spoken word.²⁸

The concept of "dramatization" covers, however, a range of possibilities, from "do-it-yourself" classroom productions, written and acted by students, with more or less intervention and advice from the teacher, to polished professional work done in authentic settings by native speakers.

It seems clear that student productions, while providing numerous other benefits already discussed, will be useful in providing practice in and information about non-verbal aspects of language only to the extent that the teacher is qualified and willing to work on authenticity of these aspects along with correcting grammar, vocabulary choices, and pronunciation. Since one can hardly expect enough rote practice to internalize differences in gesture simply by imitation, non-verbal aspects must be discussed and "verbalized" at a conscious level. If the classroom teacher is qualified to do this, classroom dramatizations might be a highly effective means of introducing the notion of kinesics and situational meaning. Television may or may not be used in such an exercise; the benefits of using this medium have already been discussed.

At the other end of the scale of possibilities are professionally-produced videotaped materials "shot" in authentic locations using native speakers. Such productions would, of course, be costly, requiring cooperative production and/or fairly wide use of the product. Assuming sufficient demand (which of course one can't), an agency such as AIT might undertake such a project, producing materials that would be as widely useful and flexible as possible (a task that would probably require a good deal of analysis of curricula and texts). Another possibility, and one that has worked well for audio materials, is that textbook publishers might produce accompanying videotapes which could be purchased by schools and colleges, or perhaps provided free if a sufficient number of texts are ordered. This latter approach would insure that videotapes were integrated into the entire instructional package being used. It is conceivable that production economies could be effected by producing several versions, at different levels of linguistic difficulty, using the same settings and actors.

In between the "do-it-yourself-in-the-classroom" approach and the professionally-produced lie a range of other possibilities. At the University of Illinois, Professor Nicholas Rzhovsky's Russian 212 class produced videotaped teaching materials for use by future classes. These taped minidramas, which followed situations and vocabulary in chapters of their text, were written by students, reviewed by the teacher, corrected, and adapted to shooting scripts with the aid of a television consultant. Students then directed and crewed productions, which were performed by native speakers or advanced graduate students.

Professor Seiichi Makino, also of the University of Illinois, has produced a series of ten-minute dramatizations designed to contextualize vocabulary and relate spoken discourse to cultural background for students of Japanese language. These productions are taped in a studio, using authentic Japanese props provided by local residents, and acted by native-speaking teaching assistants. The lessons are designed as part of a teaching package currently being developed and tested by Professor Makino which includes texts and accompanying video and audio materials.

Film segments adapted into "serial" form from a Spanish language film shot in Mexico for commercial release have been used successfully as the basis for instruction in classes at American University.²⁹ A more detailed description is provided in a latter section of this paper.

Finally, another "compromise" approach has been suggested by Corder, who envisions professionally-produced segments shot in authentic locations with native speakers being combined as elements of locally- or nationally-produced language programs.³⁰ There seems no substantive reason why such segments could not be used internationally in this way, with the remainder of the television lesson being adapted to the needs and language of the area to be served.³¹ There are some potential benefits in this approach in that introductory and follow-up materials could to a certain extent be included as part of the package, thus allowing for use by teachers not trained in these aspects of language teaching. Some activities would, of course, have to be left for the classroom if the programs are to be successful.

Needless to say, the manner in which any such televised materials are utilized in the classroom is essential to the successful use of any of these methods of presentation. Various aspects of the televised segments could be emphasized--vocabulary as it relates to context; culture; and kinesics--or all of these, perhaps with repeated showings so that students could be asked to concentrate on one aspect at a time. Vocabulary lists, pictures, slides, or audiotapes might be useful additions to printed materials distributed to teachers. Preliminary work on gestures or idioms (perhaps beginning with the students' producing their own versions in their native language, and then being asked to look for differences) might be effective. Follow-up might include student presentation of short scenes using some of the gestures and vocabulary from the televised sketch, either written by the teacher, provided as part of the utilization materials, or prepared by students working in small groups.

SOME EXEMPLARY APPROACHES TO TELEVISED LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

German, University of California at Santa Barbara

In an experiment conducted in 1964 at the University of California in Santa Barbara, Gottschalk began by analyzing course materials and isolating elements originally presented via the lecture method, and finally selecting from these those materials and exercises which he felt would profit from visual presentation.³²

Elements finally selected for televised presentation included aural comprehension, phonetics, grammar exercises and review, and enrichment. The remainder of course materials were presented in two drill sessions each week. Testing at the end of the semester showed the "TV" groups outperformed other groups in aural comprehension and translation. Attitude surveys showed that 76% of students in the two experimental sections felt they were learning "more" than they would by conventional teaching; however, students reported that they disliked the "impersonality" of the medium, and a malady termed "TV fatigue" by the experimenter manifested itself toward the end of the semester.

First-Year German, University of Minnesota

The University of Minnesota has been conducting media-aided first-year German programs since 1965.^{33, 34} As is customary at large state universities, first-year languages are taught totally by teaching assistants under the supervision of a faculty member specializing in language teaching methodology. Purposes in instituting the Minnesota TV program were as follows: (1) to provide a uniform one-source grammar explanation based on tagmemics and transformation already developed and experimentally verified for several years; (2) to standardize the pace among sections; (3) to allow the possibility of replay of lecture materials; and (4) to free the classroom teacher from the "drudgery" of grammatical explanations and drilling.

Through the years, the program has undergone a good deal of formative evaluation, a process described in some detail by the authors. The following format evolved and was in operation in 1974:

1. Two quarters of grammar presentations via TV, including drills.
2. Pronunciation practice tapes, explanations and examples, presented during the first six weeks of the first quarter only.
3. A reading videotape used in the sixth week of the first quarter.
4. Skits, beginning the sixth week of the first quarter and continuing through the year. By the third quarter these constituted the entire television instruction. Each skit is shown three times, with frames providing grammatical explanations, vocabulary explanations, and guides to idioms and cultural differences.
5. TV quizzes on skits.
6. Mini-scenes--short (one minute or so), humorous, with punch lines. Shown between longer skits.
7. Student-produced skits, based on the model of the others (which were performed by faculty and teaching assistants). The best two or three skits, corrected in collaboration with the classroom instructor, are acted out in the TV studio and videotaped and replayed as part of the regular television instruction.
8. No textbook is used. The televised lessons constitute the text.

This course, as it evolved, is reported to be highly popular with students. At the time the article was written, plans had been made to expand, continue revision, to convert materials to color production, to develop mini-capsules of cultural materials, and to develop a subprogram of vignettes stressing basic phrases and lexical subsystems.

As nearly as I could determine, apart from one small production grant, this entire program was developed without outside funding, a tribute to the

belief of its developers in its effectiveness, and also evidence that it can be done, given sufficient motivation, within regular departmental budgets. (Production per se was provided without charge by the university.)

English as a Second Language, University of Illinois

Anthony Silva, graduate student in TESL at the University of Illinois, has prepared teaching materials on language functions based on impromptu videotaped performances by native speakers of American English. These tapes are shown first without audio as the basis for a discussion of non-verbal aspects of linguistic behavior. After they have viewed the tapes with audio, students are provided with verbatim transcripts of the dialog, as well as with simplified "essential" versions and several "alternative dialogs" utilizing the same language function in different situations, and are asked to write and perform their own dialogs. Finally, videotapes of student dialogs are played back for class critique and discussion. (The original videotaped dialogs would have further usefulness as listening comprehension exercises in informal English usage.)

Accelerated Spanish, American University

A prototype, multi-channel course has been developed at American University, Washington, D.C., by Huberman and Medish.³⁵ The program, which comprises two years of college language into one without increasing student contact hours, relies for its effectiveness on extensive and systematic use of modern electronics. From its early utilization of controlled listening in the language laboratory, the program was expanded to use videotaped, dramatized dialogues acted out by native speakers. Two production methods were employed: adaptation of commercially obtained foreign films; plus taping of scenes, exercises, and exams. The movie, Buñuel's *Subida al cielo*, was transferred to videotape and shown in installments, each of which was used as a point of departure for locally-produced video materials emphasizing selected elements of Spanish structure. These consisted of skits and scenes performed by native speakers under the direction of TV professionals. All of these skits were thematically related to the film, and included comparisons and contrasts of U.S.-Mexican culture, and commentaries on social problems, among other things. Split screen techniques were used for demonstrating gestures, facial expressions, and articulation, and for tests and quizzes. Fifty percent of each class was devoted to these videotaped materials. Slightly modified versions were combined with audio-lingual exercises and pattern drills prepared to be used by students in a language laboratory equipped with individual television monitors. The authors report that the effectiveness of this means of presentation "surpassed our expectations." Rates in terms of passive recognition and active recall were 30-35% higher when new vocabulary and structural patterns were presented with a visual component rather than by conventional audio-lingual methods. Seven language classrooms have now been equipped with large-screen monitors wired to videotape recorders in the language laboratory.

The new system was thoroughly tested during its trial run in 1973. Twenty students with no previous language experience in the target language served

as the experimental group, with a control composed of randomly selected second-semester language students. Evaluations, independently conducted by the American Institute for Research,

. . . supported our theory that the addition of a visual dimension through systematic use of videotapes can considerably expedite and facilitate the learning of foreign languages.³⁶

Experimental and control groups were given the same final exam, with results showing "marked curvature" in favor of the experimental group in terms of listening comprehension, recollection, and proper usage of lexical and grammatical forms in speaking and writing; the same or higher level of reading skill; and "slightly better" pronunciation.

The method and accompanying course materials were subsequently also used by at least one other college and one high school. It should be pointed out that the entire experiment was funded by Exxon; at the time of writing attempts to develop similar programs for other languages were experiencing difficulty due to lack of adequate finances.

DELIVERY SYSTEMS

Some possible delivery systems for televised materials to be used in language teaching are suggested:

1. Portable playback/recording equipment, wheeled into classrooms as needed.
2. Installation of video cassette players and small monitors for individual student use in language laboratories, on the model of present audio-only installations. Dial access for these should be available in the near future, and random accessing is already available. The carrel of the future will probably also contain a microcomputer or PLATO terminal to be used in conjunction with the television component. Many if not most microcomputers already employ television monitors as part of their systems. The expense of such systems, needless to say, needs to be justified very carefully. Certainly, given budget constraints faced by most American colleges, individual video carrels are only called for in situations where instruction is genuinely individualized; in other situations, group viewing, in or out of class, can be easily and economically managed.
3. Cable Systems. At the University of Illinois, each dormitory room and lounge, as well as most classrooms, will be wired to receive a university cable system with two video channels and additional channel space available for audio-only transmission. The entire system will be part of the community cable system, so that university channels can be received in area homes. Such a system makes it quite feasible to transmit by cable audio

materials heretofore delivered by dial-in telephone with better sound quality and at lower expense. Students without access to cable systems would have the option, as at present, of utilizing the language laboratory facility, or classrooms could be set aside on campus for cable reception for commuting students or others who find this more convenient.

4. Finally, broadcast or narrowcast will still have uses. Both not only "get the material into the schools" but also make it possible for schools to copy materials for later playback at convenient times. Uses in adult education as well should not be overlooked.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

While, as we hope to have demonstrated, video technology presents some clear advantages as a medium for many aspects of teaching foreign languages, any one familiar with the development of media use in education in the U.S. knows that there will be no great rush to adopt this technology--at least, unless the bill is picked up by some outside agency. Rather, one sees use of television in language classrooms evolving gradually, mostly as the result of informal experiments on the part of individual teachers. But it is clearly true that the best and most solid growth in media use is that which comes about as the result of felt needs on the part of educators who are willing to put forth extra effort to meet those needs, rather than as a result of temporary infusions of outside money and grant-generated enthusiasm.

Most of the argument of this paper has, admittedly, been based on authority, intuition, or logic (we hope!) rather than on solid experimental evidence. In our defense, we point out merely that the same is true of the entire enterprise of language teaching, and, in fact, of higher education itself. As Brown states in *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching*,

We have only just begun to stockpile some empirical, scientific evidence in second language acquisition, partly because of the overwhelming difficulty of controlling variables.³⁷

He expresses hope that teachers in fairly large numbers may conduct competently-designed research on a modest scale in their own classrooms. Much knowledge about what we are doing in foreign language education could eventually be gained by this process, he reasons, ". . . however minuscule the individual contributions."³⁸

Hopefully, one of the things that will get tested is the application, in its various permutations, of video technology as an aid to foreign language teaching. Television itself may also serve well as a research tool, since it can be used to record classroom activities and data for later consideration.³⁹ And it is already widely accepted as a valuable aid in teacher training.

All of this will be, and healthily so, a gradual process, but if one could look ahead to the year 2000, we might expect to find every language laboratory carrel or station equipped with microcomputers and programmable video, as well as with audio equipment; we would also see video materials for home

study sent out via cable or phone lines, perhaps for use in conjunction with a home computer terminal.

What should not be allowed to happen is that available technology, simply by existing, should determine what is to be taught, or even, ultimately, how. But not to take advantage of television's potential might be to allow technology to dominate by default: the fact that audio systems are less expensive and already installed does not necessarily mean they are the best, or only, audiovisual aid for foreign language teaching.

FOOTNOTES

¹Brown (1980). For his discussion of the development of teaching methodologies, see pp. 240-245.

²See, for example, the Mueller experiment at the University of Florida, Gainesville, cited in Nostrand (1962), p. 107, which used videotapes programmed according to Skinnerian psychology.

³This generalization is based on information gleaned from Nostrand (1962), pp. 103-109; and MacLennan and Reid (1964), passim.

⁴Chu and Schramm (1967), p. 10.

⁵Cornfield (1966), p. 74.

⁶Nostrand, "Describing and Teaching the Sociocultural Context of a Foreign Language and Literature," in Valdman (1966), 22. I assume throughout this discussion that film and television are interchangeable media, i.e., that film can be transferred to tape, or that television would have provided a feasible means for the original recording of the particular materials in question.

⁷For another use of television as a "motivator," see also the use by Shapiro, cited below, p. 5.

⁸Berwald (1976), pp. 222-226.

⁹Cornfield (1966), p. 76.

¹⁰Kern (1959-60), p. 132.

¹¹Berwald (1976), pp. 222-223.

¹²Asher (1969), p. 3.

¹³Elkins, Kalivoda, and Morain (1972), pp. 61-67; and Kalivoda, Morain, and Elkins (1971), pp. 392-400.

¹⁴See, for example, suggestions in Crouse and Noll (1980), p. 392.

¹⁵Keilstrup (1980), p. 369.

¹⁶Ecklund and Wiese (1981), pp. 17-23.

¹⁷ibid., p. 18.

¹⁸Nostrand, Howard Lee, "Describing and Teaching the Sociocultural Context of a Foreign Language and Literature," in Valdman (1966), p. 23.

¹⁹Corder (1966), pp. 13-16.

²⁰Hayes (1965), p. 286.

²¹Rivers (1964), p. 144.

²²ibid., p. 154.

²³Cited in Morain, p. 5.

²⁴Kirch (1979), pp. 416-423.

²⁵Green, p. 4.

²⁶By this term, I mean information concerning the day-to-day life in a country--food, education, work, popular culture, etc.

²⁷Morain (1978), p. 3.

²⁸Huebener (1967), p. 3.

²⁹Huberman and Medish (1974) and (1975).

³⁰Corder, "Modern Foreign Language Teaching by Television," in Valdman (1966), p. 245.

³¹I have seen, in fact, one such effort--an elementary-level Spanish program produced in Washington State--which contained segments taped in West Germany. This effort, which in retrospect I think may well have been inspired by Corder's suggestion, was, unfortunately, unsuccessful. The sleek German-produced scenes jarred against a rather amateurish local contribution, which in any event failed to integrate the German-made segments successfully into the program.

³²Gottschalk (1965).

³³Formanek, Clausen, and Wood (1974).

³⁴Thanks are due to Professor Cecil Wood for sending a sample tape of "skits" for viewing by the author of this report, together with copies and drafts of articles not otherwise available to this writer, and to Professor Charles J. McIntyre of the University of Illinois Office of Instructional Resources for facilitating this loan.

³⁵Huberman and Medish (1974) and (1975).

³⁶ibid., p. 49.

³⁷Brown (1980), p. 220.

³⁸Ibid., p. 221.

³⁹For example, Elizabeth Leemann, doctoral candidate in Second Language Acquisition in the University of Illinois College of Education, and a faculty member of Dalhousie University, is presently using video recordings of teaching assistants in the university's French Department as the basis for a study of non-verbal aspects of teaching.

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